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**THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH WANTS MISSISSIPPIANS TO KNOW  
HOW TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS**

Jackson – Common reactions to traumatic events like Hurricane Katrina include feeling afraid, sad, horrified, helpless, angry, overwhelmed, confused, distracted, emotionally numb, or disoriented. People may also be bothered by nightmares or upsetting thoughts and images that come to mind. Young children may be upset, distracted, or feel out of sorts. These are normal reactions to very stressful events. With the help of family and friends, most people gradually feel better as time goes by.

**What can adults do to help children cope?**

- Let them know you understand their feelings.
- Tell them that they really are safe.
- Keep to your usual routines.
- Keep them from seeing too many frightening pictures of the events.
- Educate yourself about how to talk to children of different ages about trauma.

Sometimes people need extra help to deal with a traumatic event. People directly affected by this tragedy, young children, people who have been through other traumatic events, and people with emotional problems are more likely to need professional help.

Project Recovery, a division of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, has been developed to assist people in finding ways to cope with stress caused by Hurricane Katrina. Expressing your feelings about a traumatic event like Katrina is important. Project Recovery provides free crisis counseling services through community outreach, public education and information and referral. There are no medical or financial screening methods to qualify to receive services.

Project Recovery is funded through a grant by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and facilitated with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Project Recovery Helpline is accessible 24-hours a day, seven days a week. For assistance, please call 1-866-856-3227.

**Source:** The National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, [www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)

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